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The Visitor



Chapter 1 by Jacob Z Klimaszewski

I approached the bench on the top of the hill, like every Saturday morning. The mist was still lingering.

But this morning there was someone already there. I was furious, but, not wanting to be impolite, sat down delicately.

But then, he had the audacity to turn to me. His leather hat was so low down I could barely see his eyes, but they were silver, and had a reflective quality that I had never seen before. I found them unnerving.

'Good morning!' he said with a refreshing friendliness. Although I was still annoyed at his denying of my solitary seat.

I smiled in reply.

'Do you ever think about what kind of future you want for yourself?' he said to me.

I immediately became uncomfortable. But I did not leave. There was a part of me that wished to be asked the question, a part that wanted to talk at a depth that I normally am not accustomed.

As I began to speak, I noticed that the man was holding my hand. But, against all rationality, I did not feel afraid. It didn't feel sordid, it felt friendly. Like a father to a daughter. A mother to a son.

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He raised an eyebrow and made a funny grin. Whisking a hand from some unseen pocket, he produced a small flask and scooted over on the bench, patting for me to join him. "I'm not busy. Tell me about it."

For some reason, I did. We must have talked for an hour as we emptied his flask of strange, vegetal liqueur. I told him about my daily pilgrimage to the top of this hill beneath the gloaming dawn, and the reason for it. Of the death of my sister, and my shame and guilt at having survived. Of the many, many trials and betrayals we'd weathered together before.

"She was my life," I finished. "We did everything together, and I did everything for her approval. I wanted to *be* her."

He nodded, his brow creased in thought, and he took my hand again.

"I know how to help you."

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